



# *Milwaukee County Board*

## Supervisor Deanna Alexander, 18<sup>th</sup> District

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### **Supervisor Alexander Stands Firm on “Bathroom Bill” Compromise** *Milwaukee County Board Carelessly Blows Off Protecting the Public from Sex Offenders*

Milwaukee County Supervisor Deanna Alexander offered compromise after compromise during the County Board’s vote on a controversial and problematic anti-discrimination ordinance, but a majority of the Board denied every effort to move forward.

Many people were worried because the anti-discrimination ordinance guaranteed very broad legal protections for those self-identifying as another gender to have a right to utilize all county facilities.

“Citizens were rightfully concerned that this law would extend protections for peeping toms and other predators to use LGBT protections as cover for going into bathrooms they don’t belong,” said Alexander.

“All of us should want to treat people fairly and respect diversity, but at some point we must remember common sense and ensure that we protect the public. I believe this ordinance leaves some loopholes that are going to aid sexual predators in hurting our community.”

The definitions of “gender identity” and “gender expression” were so sweeping that several board members admitted that they could not figure out their meaning or even identify who would be protected by the new ordinances.

While agreeing to help protect the rights of LGBT individuals to seek employment, to work, and to participate in County services without discrimination, Supervisor Alexander sought to make the following additions to the bill:

- Prevent registered sex offenders from using the anti-discrimination ordinance as cover for entering restrooms and changing areas to commit crimes.
- Require the county to put signage on multi-person restroom and changing room doors to indicate that trans-gendered persons may use those rooms. Require signage identifying the locations of private-use restrooms.

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- Clearly identify that the intent of the County ordinance in the broad definitions of sexual preference, gender identity, and gender expression would not ever include reverence for pedophilia, regardless of how any medical, state, or federal definitions might change over time.
- Religious exemptions for County contractors and those providing housing to the public in a shared or boarding house atmosphere.
- Ensuring that no individuals could manipulate County departments’ workplace rules by improperly citing the anti-discrimination ordinance.

The County Board denied the addition of every single clause. Chairwoman Dimitrijevic claimed that the word “pedophile” was offensive and banned its use in the meeting, attempting to censor Supervisor Alexander’s choice of words as she defended her amendments in debate. Other Supervisors claimed that the amendments were “hate speech.”

“My primary job as a policymaker is to ensure we do a good job exploring the ramifications of new laws and that we do our due diligence in writing laws that are specific enough to actually mean something,” said Alexander.

“Everything I’ve proposed and said was respectful of the public and the LGBT community—some Supervisors were just so bent on feeding stereotypes, they clearly leaned on silly allegations instead of actually *listening* to debate.”

After making a circular argument claiming that the ordinance allowing access to “all facilities” had nothing to do with bathrooms, Supervisor Peggy Romo West dissented on putting up signs letting people know which genders could access restrooms due to her perception that it would cost too much money.

“When we’re talking about letting women know that men have a legal right to be present where they undress, the cost of printing a piece of paper to post on the door is irrelevant to me—public safety comes first,” said Alexander.

At the end of hours of debate, Supervisor Alexander made a final attempt at compromise by calling to divide the question, or to pass the ordinance in two parts so that Supervisors could vote for the parts they supported and deny the portions that they still had questions about.

The County Board denied that motion and passed the resolution on a 12-6 vote.

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